DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 187 287 HE 012 773

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TITLE An Alternative for the College-bound Senior: CEEB-AP or College Courses.
PUB DATE 30 Mar 80
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (March 30, 1980). Best copy available.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academically Gifted; Advanced Courses; *Advanced Placement Programs; *Articulation (Education); *College Bound Students; *College Credits; College Curriculum; *College Entrance Examinations; College School Cooperation; Educational Attainment; Higher Education; High School Students; Secondary Education; Transfer Policy
IDENTIFIERS *Advanced Placement Examinations (CEEB)

ABSTRACT

The use of advanced placement in high school through the College Entrance Examination Board test and the offering of college courses for students at the high school level are considered. A survey of colleges and universities on the waiving of courses versus actual credit granting, the transferability of college credits earned while in high school, and specific policies governing both these programs was conducted. The difficulty of locating the formal policy concerning the evaluation for advanced placement at various colleges and universities is noted. Since most colleges accept advanced placement but have different policies about the awarding of credit or waiving of courses, students need to obtain a statement in writing from the college they wish to attend on the method they use. The survey data indicate that approximately 50 percent of students applying for advanced credit receive the credit or the right to waive a course. Colleges do not grant credit for the same course for the same grade obtained on the advanced placement test. The need for colleges to respond to high school requests for information about specific courses being exempted and the credit awarded is stressed. The teaching of college courses by high school teachers is discussed as an alternative to the advanced placement test. Difficulties in negotiating this type of arrangement are noted, and suggestions for dealing with complications are offered. (SW)

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THE ASSOCIATION FOR SUPERVISION & CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT
1980 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Special Session - March 30, 1980

"An Alternative for the College-bound Senior: CEEB-AP or College Courses"

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The purpose of this special session is to generate a discussion on two alternatives for the college-bound senior; advanced placement as per the College Entrance Examination Board and the taking of college courses while a high school student. Before letting you, the participants in this session, offer your experiences, feelings, and ideas on these two programs, let me develop for you these concepts as I see them currently.

During the past several years the College Entrance Examination Board, in conjunction with Educational Testing Service, has promoted the use of advanced placement testing for high school seniors planning on attending college. Most of the high school students who are taking these courses are taking them with the notion that a score of 3 or above on the advanced placement test will give them college credits at the college of their choice. The idea of credit by examination is certainly not a new idea and, of course, is a viable option if it can be properly implemented.

Recently many testing programs have come under attack by different groups across the nation. This portion of the session is not meant as an attack on this particular testing program, but rather just the laying out of the facts concerning the College Entrance Examination Program advanced placement test administered by Educational Testing Service.

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In order to effectively do this, one must start with a brief overview of the non-profit organization, Educational Testing Service, who is delegated with the authority to administer the advanced placement exams. Besides the advanced placement test, Educational Testing Service markets 299 different tests. They determine entrance to more than 60 occupations including fire-fighting, real estate, and auto mechanics. Educational Testing Service's tests are the gateway to Foreign Service, the New York Stock Exchange, and the practice of law in more than 40 states. Educational Testing Service gives tests in 120 countries.

Educational Testing Service has more customers per year than General Motors and Ford combined. Its revenue from test fees enabled Educational Testing Service to double in size every five years from 1948 to 1972 faster than IBM, yet this nonprofit "educational institution" is exempt from federal and state income taxes, and is unaffected by many antitrust laws and has no stockholders. Educational Testing Service President, William Turnbull, has said to critics of his corporation, "It's all a matter of whether you trust us." Well, it seems that many high school students and their parents have trusted the College Entrance Examination Board and Educational Testing Service (and I use these synonomously as I wonder how much separation between the two actually exist) and have received nothing but a hassle when it comes to the advanced placement program.

A little over a year ago I had some unpleasant feelings about the advanced placement program - not in the courses that were being taught, but rather in the test and credit granting area of the program. I expressed these concerns to our guidance counselors and fellow administrators and no one seemed to have any answer other than those put forth by the College Entrance Examination Board. To try to put to rest my uncertainties, I

developed a survey and sampled, anonomously, 175 colleges and universities throughout the United States. As this survey was conducted from within Pennsylvania, 65 of the commonwealth's 97 four year colleges were surveyed. The remaining colleges were chosen at random using Barron's Profiles of American Colleges. The survey instrument was designed to get feedback from the colleges and universities on the waiving of courses versus actual credit granting, the transferability of college credits earned while in high school, and specific policies governing both these programs.

In the area of the waiving of courses, a large number of institutions of higher education responded that they do allow certain courses to be waived if certain criteria is met. This criteria seems to be a grade of 3 or above on the advanced placement test. Of course it is not this simple, as waiving of a course does not imply the granting of college credit towards graduation. Many counselors and students have a misconceived notion that waiving is synonomous with credit granting.

It also is interesting to note that 90% of the respondents to the survey said that they grant credit to those students who meet certain criteria on the advanced placement test. What makes this even more interesting is that only 79% of the respondents said that they waive course requirements. Does this mean that they (the colleges) will grant you credit but still make you take the course?

I also thought that most institutions of higher education would have a formal policy outlining their procedures concerning the evaluation for advanced placement. The results of the survey agreed with this assumption, but what makes the issue interesting is where the formal policy is located and/or what the policy may be.

Analysis of the data shows that almost half the institutions responded that information as to their "formal policy on advanced placement" could be found in their college catalog. Taking the bull by the horns, I randomly selected 45 catalogs of colleges that were involved in the survey and found several startling facts. A formal outline was offered in 7 catalogs, a short paragraph stating the college "may" accept College Entrance Examination Board advanced placement was mentioned in 18 catalogs, 10 college catalogs stated advanced placement was up to the individual departments of the colleges, 4 catalogs recommended advanced placement but failed to say how to obtain it, and 5 catalogs had no mention at all of advanced placement programs. It is also interesting to note that one college said that they accept advanced placement but required the student to pay the standard fee for the credits they would grant the student. This is particularly ironic, as in this instance a student not only pays to take the advanced placement test but also pays the college directly for the credit they grant. Both college and testing service comes out the winner while the student only gains not taking the course over again.

Maybe that's a bit harsh - the student of course gains several other more important things, and I'll try my best to mention them in an unbiased manner. First and possibly foremost, the advanced placement program provides a challenge for high school students and an atmosphere different than that which they are accustomed to. Usually an experienced teacher, one who is concerned with the students educational development at a higher level of thinking, teaches the course. Many interviewed students recognize that they seem to have learned much more in this program than if they would have stayed in a regular classroom. There is much to be said for these aspects of the advanced placement program and should not be overlooked. Students should

not be discouraged from participating in these programs, but rather we, as educators, should strive for a consistent policy among colleges so that students who do participate hoping to get college credit will not get hassled when they seek it.

This is crucial, as the data from my survey shows that even though most colleges "accept" advanced placement, their policies vary greatly. It is imperative that should students choose the College Entrance Examination Board advanced placement method as a head start on college, they should obtain a statement in writing from the college they wish to attend containing the college policy concerning the granting of credit using this method.

When making a decision, students and counselors should not just read the policies governing advanced placement. It seems that specific policies affect individual students differently. Therefore, it is of great importance that one read between the lines of an admissions catalog or speak directly to the right, and I stress right, admissions counselor so that the policy they are quoted will, in fact, be the policy which will pertain to them at the time of admissions. Also, write down that counselors name and date and time of the conversation and keep it handy for future reference.

All of this may seem tedious or maybe improper to do, but whenever you let this get you down, just remember this. My data states that approximately 50% of students applying for advanced credit receive the credit or the right to waive a course. This leaves another 50% unaccounted for, and for this 50%, a sincere test of their patience may be given when applying to a college for action on their advanced placement courses.

I honestly do not know who is most to blame for this situation, but I do know that as concerned educators and parents, it is our job to straighten it out. But this will not be any easy task, as straightening out means consistency, and right now there is little or none of this.

Consistency should mean that colleges or universities will grant credit for the same courses for the same grade obtained on the advanced placement test. At this time there is consistency in neither of these two areas - I repeat, neither area. Colleges do not grant exemption or credit for the same grade. Furthermore, one college may grant credit for a different course than another.

My research shows that no general rule can be developed on what grade accomplishes what for each student. In fact, the research shows that many colleges/universitits allow each department to make up the regulations which would govern their courses and these rules/regulations may in fact be different depending on what course it pertains to in that department. For example, a mathematics department may require a grade of a 5 for Calculus credit, but will grant credit for a lower level course with a lower grade.

Currently I have been trying to gather additional data to share with our students in this area of advanced placement testing. My current project is trying to zero in on what is actually affecting the individual students participating in the advanced placement program. By this I mean what is the actual course which colleges are giving students credit for at their particular institution. At this time the results are still coming in, but I would like to share with you what I have available.

If you are participants in the advanced placement program, then you must be aware of the college action report-school copy which each high school receives for those students taking the advanced placement test. A blank copy is sent to the high school for their records while an identical copy is sent to the college to fill out the appropriate information. The college is then requested to send the completed copy back to the high school. The purpose of this is to ascertain the specific course is being exempted and the credit awarded.

My high school, Bensalem High School, in suburban Pennsylvania, near Philadelphia, is a fairly large high school. We have numerous participants in the advanced placement program and a good number conclude the course by taking the advanced placement test. Our students go to a large amount of different colleges, yet we receive little information back from them concerning the disposition of the advanced placement program. Because of this, I started to write to all the colleges that didn't respond to the college action report. This personal letter generated responses from the various colleges, but no real patterns could be found. To gain a larger sample I have now asked 35 other high schools what they have found to be true in regard to this. As I have said, I still do not have all the results, but I'll share with you what I have.

Out of the 35 high schools polled, 26 have already responded. Out of the 26, eight responded that they have no advanced placement program whatsoever. This is astonishing, as to listen to the college entrance examination board, almost everyone participates in the advanced placement program - yet my survey indicates that 30% of the high schools do not offer formal advanced placement courses.

Of the remaining 70% that do participate, the comment "Not all the colleges notify us of the actions they take on students" prevail. This is very disheartening, as successful counseling requires knowledge about the programs you are counseling. Not to know what colleges are doing with the advanced placement grades does not allow good counseling to take place.

After getting by this comment and sifting through the other data, another generality can be made. Not all colleges are granting credit for the same grade obtained on the advanced placement test, nor are they granting credit for the same course. For example, college "A" may grant Calculus credit for a certain grade on the advanced placement test, while college "B"

may grant credit for a math elective. Furthermore, college "C" may even give certain students credit for Calculus while others receive credit for another course. This practice with college "C" is particularly critical, as consistency within a college doesn't even exist. Again, if you recall my earlier plea for consistency, we certainly need it here - in the area of what course will be credited for participants in the advanced placement program.

I'll be back to advanced placement in a while, but in the meantime, let me tell you of a viable alternative to the advanced placement program. This alternative is a high school/college cooperative program. This cooperative program would allow for the teaching of college level (advanced placement) courses right at the high school by current high school staff members. To obtain college credit a student would merely pay the appropriate fees to the college underwriting the course(s) which would be offered to all average and above average students who plan on attending college. The inclusion of this type of program in the traditional high school setting would provide students with a new challenge to offset the senior doldrums, while at the same time, it also gives students the opportunity to try their hand at the rigors of college course work while still in a familiar supportive setting.

The teaching of college courses in high school to high school students is an idea whose time has come. Many students who graduate from high school and go on to college return later and complain that some of their first college courses have just repeated what they have already learned in high school. This type of program can provide kinds of experiences to students and be taught during the senior year of high school as part of the regular curriculum.

A number of high school students across the country already take college courses in an off campus program; this only satisfies a small need in our

curriculum. This type of program would be available to more students, and in a setting that many would prefer for one reason or another, for example, students who do not have transportation to an off high school site can participate easily in this proposed program. Another group of students actively involved in after school activities could also be served by this program.

The objectives of the program are quite simple:

1. To have courses at high schools that would be authorized for the granting of college credit by a local college.
2. To make this course a part of the regular school curriculum and offer it to college bound seniors.
3. To have an annual follow-up to be sure that the majority of colleges that the participating students attend accept the college credits granted through their successful participation in the program.

This year at Bensalem High School we are offering such a program in conjunction with Widener University of Chester, Pennsylvania. In the initial implementation of the program we chose one course, Calculus, to offer to our students. In the upcoming school year the program will probably be expanded to include advanced biology. The reason for the choice of these courses is that they need the least modification to adapt to the parallel university course. Tuition requirements are paid by the students directly to Widener at a reduced rate, or about 20% of the normal tuition. This is due to the use of our building, books, teacher, etc.

Our high school/college cooperative program is known as Project WISH - Widener in Senior High, and is considered a new innovative program in Pennsylvania. Although it is new for Pennsylvania, it has been tried and has been quite successful with many schools and colleges throughout the

country. Our justification for this program is based on the results of my initial survey which shows that it is easier to transfer college credits from a degree granting institution rather than the evaluation procedure used by colleges pertaining to College Entrance Examination Board advanced placement.

To institute this type of program you need, as a primary requirement, a good deal of patience. This patience is going to be tried in your negotiation to find a college who is willing to cooperate. Many colleges will first see the program as a stomping ground to get more students. In this day and age, with decreasing enrollments and costs up, I can understand why the colleges might act this way, but the program's legitimacy lies in the fact that it is not for the college but for the students. Widener surely sees it this way, and has given a good deal to make the program successful for the students involved.

You will also need patience when you begin speaking to the colleges concerning who will be teaching the course. They (the colleges) are ready to send a professor to your high school to teach the course, but when you state it will be your staff member, they start to balk. They usually give, as a final reason for not wanting to pursue the program, union problems. This may be true, as when I began looking for a college, I approached the local community college. The program went full blast until the teachers union found out, then began picketing under the protest that they would be loosing sections to teach. It may be beneficial for you that you look for a college which doesn't have a union, such as Widener. In my case, Widener has been cooperative in approving teachers, the regulation being a masters degree in the subject field and an interview with the dean.

A third stumbling block may be in your own staff. If you really believe that your classes are of college quality and if a college wants to send a

professor to you to teach your course, you may have a tendency to say yes. Just as the colleges suggest union problems resulting from the reverse, it is also true in this example. Your teachers "association" most definately will say no for the same reason the college teachers said no. It is my suggestion that if this is proposed to you, that you say no.

The last stumbling block is the modification of your existing high school courses to meet the college standards. Make the colleges believe that your course is as good as theirs. Present your course guide to them in a positive manner stating that only slight modification will be accepted on your part. Should they state that they will only work with their course guide, refuse them, stating that this is not a curriculum revision project.

After careful negotiations, I am sure that you will find a college who is willing to work with you in the development of the program.

Both the College Entrance Examination Board advanced placement and the actual taking of college courses in high school offer more than just a head start in college. They provide a challenge for high school students and an educational atmosphere different from that to which they are accustomed. It is important, though, that everyone realize the need for consistency in and among colleges concerning advanced placement. Until this consistency is reached, students will never cease to have problems. In this light it is important to recognize the relative ease of transferability of college credits among institutions. Because of this ease it would seem that this is a viable alternative, an alternative which most high schools should strive to obtain.

In summary, the question of advanced placement testing versus obtaining actual college credits in high school is most complex. I believe that I have raised various important issues concerning this. There probably are

other issues of equal importance which I have skipped today. My intention is to raise some points, suggest some possible solutions, and ask some challenging questions. As educators concerned with this topic, whether you like it or not, you must consider my points. You must ask yourself if you want to join the bandwagon in either of the two programs. You must also ask yourself how can you help out in rectifying the problems associated with, particularly, the advanced placement program.

After entertaining your questions and comments, please feel free to pick up a transcript of this presentation and a copy of the data from the first survey.* This data is being provided by the Pennsylvania Association of Secondary School Principals. Should you desire a copy of the upcoming survey data once it is completed, please leave your name and address with me.

Thank you for your attention.

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